



In this unit the children are introduced to the 'gamelan'. 'Gamelan' is the name for a traditional Indonesian percussion orchestra. It consists largely of percussion instruments (most of which are made of metal), which typically include metallophones (tuned percussion instruments made up of metal bars which are struck with a beater or a mallet, like the Western glockenspiel), gongs and drums.

By listening to gamelan music from Java and Bali the children learn that gamelan music is built around a basic melody known as the 'balungan' which is built on one of two groups of pitches using 5 or 7 notes. Around the balungan there are other interweaving parts. Often, lower instruments play slower lines with less notes and higher instruments embellish, playing faster lines. Throughout the course of the unit the children learn to play a piece for gamelan called Lancaran Cobowo on the glockenspiel which uses three different interweaving parts accompanied by untuned percussion.

Lesson Sequencing

In lesson 1 the children are introduced to the gamelan by listening to a piece of music from Java (*Jipang Walik*), which is the Indonesian island on which over 50% of the Indonesian population live. They then start to learn the melody of a piece for gamelan called Lancaran Cobowo on the glockenspiel.

In lesson 2 the children learn that gamelan music is built around a basic melody known as the 'balungan'. The balungan in gamelan music is based on one of two main scales, or groups of pitches. For each gamelan these are tuned slightly differently but they approximate to a pentatonic (five-note) scale using the notes C D F G A (known as the 'slendro') or a seven-note scale that uses the notes E F G A B C D (known as the 'pelog'). The children continue to learn, and become fluent playing the melody for Lancaran Cobowo on glockenspiels which uses the pelog scale.

In lesson 3 the children learn about what makes up the texture (different layers) of gamelan music. The double ended drums in the gamelan ensemble (kendhang) are considered to be the leader of the group. The balungan is like the basic melody around which the other parts of the music fit. Around the balungan there are other interweaving parts. Often, lower instruments play slower lines with less notes and higher instruments embellish, playing faster lines. The children start to experiment playing such texture

themselves, adding a faster, and higher part to the balungan for Lancaran Cobowo.

In lesson 4 the children learn that gamelan music from different areas of Indonesia has different characteristics. They listen to music from Java and contrast this with music from Bali. Music from Java is generally gentler, lower-pitched and often slower. Music from Bali is generally more energetic and higher. In the two examples listened to in this lesson the music from Java includes the sound of a bamboo flute and proceeds at a slow, steady pace. The music from Bali doesn't include the flute and feels more energetic and dramatic. The music often stops and starts and uses strong dynamic contrast. The children learn a third part to add to the first two parts of Lancaran Cobowo which they have learnt in lessons 1-3 which moves at half of the speed of the balungan.

In lesson 5 the children learn about the purpose of gamelan music, how it is used to accompany ceremonies, dance and shadow puppet theatre as well as being played in concerts. They go on to learn that although Islam is now the main religion in Indonesia, the gamelan has its roots in the Hindu/Buddhist culture. At the end of the lesson they practise the three parts of their gamelan piece which they have put together over the course of the last four lessons and add drums to finish the piece.

In lesson 6, the children perform and record Lancaran Cobowo which they have learnt throughout the course of the unit. They then evaluate their performance. In doing so, they learn that we can evaluate a performance to make it better next time. By practising the piece so it is ready for performance they develop their skills in playing together as an ensemble and following one child who acts as a leader of the group.

Musical Focus

Instrumentation

·'Gamelan' is the name for a traditional Indonesian percussion orchestra

Pitch and Melody

- Gamelan music is built around a melody (balungan)
- The melody is based around either a 5 or 7 note scale (slendro and pelog)

Texture

- Music can be made up of different layers.
- In gamelan music different parts play notes to fit around the balungan

Dynamics

- Use of dynamic contrast—loud and quiet

Links to Prior/Following Units

Year 1

Autumn B—*Samba* (Texture—Layering different rhythmic patterns over a pulse)

Spring B—*Ostinato I* (Texture—Layering different rhythmic patterns)

Year 2

Autumn B—*Beat Music* (Texture—Melody and accompaniment)

Spring A—*Peter and the Wolf* (Dynamics—Crescendo)

Summer A—*Emotions in Sound* (Texture —layering sound)

Year 3

Autumn B—*Pachelbel's Canon* (Texture—Layering parts in canon)

Spring B—*Sounds of the Sea* (Dynamics—changes in dynamics)

Summer B— *Indian Classical Music* (Texture—Rag and Tal)

Outcomes

As a class learn to play and perform a piece of music for gamelan, in five parts on the glockenspiel and drums.

Key Learning Points

- Indonesia is a country in Asia made up of many islands. Two of these are Java and Bali.
- ‘Gamelan’ is the name for a traditional Indonesian percussion orchestra which often includes instruments made from metal

- like metallophones, gongs and drums.
- Gamelan music has its roots in the Hindu/Buddhist culture of Indonesia.
- Gamelan music is used in concerts and to accompany ceremonies, dancing and shadow puppet theatre.
- Gamelan music from Java and Bali has different characteristics.
- Gamelan music is built around a basic melody known as the 'balungan'.
- The balungan is based around either a 5-note scale (slendro) or a 7-note scale (pelog).
- Music can be made up of different layers of sound which is called 'texture'.
- In gamelan music the kendhang drums are considered to be the leader of the group.
- Other players play notes to fit around the balungan. Lower instruments often play slower lines with less notes and higher instruments often play faster lines with more notes.

Progression: Technical, Constructive, Expressive

Singing

Children learn and sing call and response and action songs, including Indonesian songs, to warm up at the beginning of each lesson. This develops their technical singing skills which include posture hold, breath control, singing with a pulse, imitating rhythms, varying speed, holding a particular pitch and singing together in an ensemble. Practising songs over the course of six lessons ensures familiarity and increasing sophistication of musical expression.

Listening

Children practise 'active' listening, developing their skills in identifying melodic patterns, different instruments, how the music makes them feel and comparing music from Bali and Java. By listening to gamelan music they begin to have conscious understanding of how music is constructed, focussing on the dimensions of pitch, melody, texture and dynamics. By studying this music, they begin to develop an increasing an understanding of the expressive qualities of music from a particular culture/genre written for particular instruments.

Practising

Practising a piece of music written for the gamelan which the children play on tuned and untuned percussion instruments develops technical motor skills and an internal sense of pulse, rhythm and pitch. Layering different parts over a pulse develops knowledge of handling pulse, rhythm, pitch, melody, dynamics and texture as component dimensions of making music. Practising the skills required for building the piece gradually over the course of the unit, ensures increasing confidence and sophistication in the expressive quality of musical outcomes.

Performing

Working towards performance of a piece of music as a class over the course of six lessons ensures increased technical accuracy, confidence, fluency, expression and the ability to play securely in an ensemble, following a leader.